

## Speech of President Sarkozy at presentation of Légion d'Honneur in recognition of INTERPOL

Paris, France - 10 June 2008

### Ronald Kenneth Noble

[Ronald Kenneth Noble](#), you have been Secretary General of INTERPOL since 2000, and are the first American to have led this prestigious international organization dedicated to fighting crime. By making you a *Chevalier* of the *Légion d'Honneur*, I wish to honour not only the man and INTERPOL, but also the friend of France.

You owe this dedication to the service of all the people of the world to your parents who taught you the meaning of work. You were open to the world and chose to serve the Federal State as a lawyer and then as Assistant United States Attorney under the United States Federal Judge at the Court of Appeals in Philadelphia. Your reputation for fighting drug trafficking led to you joining the Department of Justice in Washington under the Attorney General.



The presentation of the Légion d'Honneur was made at the Elysée Palace.

With the election of Bill Clinton in 1993, you became the United States Department of Treasury's first Undersecretary for Enforcement, responsible for combating all forms of organized crime and, in 1999, you were nominated to become Secretary General of INTERPOL.

INTERPOL was founded in 1923 and has 186 members, almost as many as the United Nations, with 192 States. It is a less well-known institution, and we are often unaware of its decisive contribution on behalf of all the world's police forces in cases of organized crime, [money laundering](#), [terrorism](#), [child sex abuse](#), and more.

At the head of INTERPOL, you undertook the modernization of its working methods, budget, structure and technology to speed up the procedures for searching for criminals. After 11 September 2001, contacts were established with the United Nations to improve the fight against Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Also, the adoption of Arabic as the fourth working language, in addition to French, English and Spanish, allowed information to be disseminated more effectively.

Finally, I wish to honour the friend of France. A lover of Matisse and Braque, you speak French very well, you love Paris and Lyon, and you delight in the Lyonnais cuisine – indeed you know all the chefs of the Rhône-Alpes region.

You are one of a line of Americans who, since Jefferson and Franklin, have worked to enhance relations between the United States and France ... and for your generosity of spirit, your untiring desire to work for justice in the world, and for your love of France, I am happy to decorate you this evening.